

2

Āyācana Sutta

The Discourse on the Request | S 6.1
or **Brahmāyācana Sutta** Discourse on Brahmā's Supplication
Theme: Brahmā invites the Buddha to teach the Dharma
Translated by Piya Tan ©2004

1 Significant events

1.1 BRAHMĀ'S REQUEST

1.1.1 Soon after the great awakening, while the Buddha is sitting under the Aja,pāla Nigrodha [Goat-herd's Banyan], hesitating as to whether or not he should teach the Dharma, Brahmā Saham,pati appears before him and beseeches him to open to the world the doors of immortality. The Buddha agrees to this urgent request [§§12-14]. The canonical account of this important event is found in several places.¹

1.1.2 The occasion of Brahmā's entreaty is recorded here in the Āyācana Sutta, **the Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta** (M 26),² **the Mahā'padāna Sutta** (D 14)³ and **the Vinaya** (Mv 5 @ V 1:4-7). The Commentaries assign the episode to the 8th week after the great awakening.⁴ A Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit parallel episode is found in **the Mahāvastu**,⁵ which however is more ornate, with several variant versions of the meeting between the Buddha and Brahmā Saham,pati, more or less corresponding with the Pāli version.

1.1.3 Buddhaghosa explains that the Buddha is reluctant to teach, not on account of indolence, but because he wishes Brahmā Saham,pati to request him to do so.⁶ For, the world honours Brahmā greatly, and when people realize that Brahmā himself has humbly beseeched the Buddha to spread his teaching, they would pay more attention to it. Saham,pati is, at this time, the most senior of the Brahmās in this universe⁷ (*imasmim cakka,vāle jeṭṭhaka,mahā,brahme*) (DA 2:467). [2]

1.2 THE LOTUS POND PARABLE

1.2.1 It is well known that in the parable of the lotus pond, the pond represents the waters of samsara which drowns us, and **the 3 kinds of lotuses** are the three kinds of beings in the world. Those deeply caught with the world are like the lotuses deep at the bottom of the dark muddy waters, the food of water creatures. The lotuses that stand above the water, fully blooming in the sun represent the awakened ones, or the saints on the path to awakening.

The lotuses partly floating, partly sinking, on the water surface, are those “with little dust in their eyes,” who, listening to the Dharma, would awaken to true reality. They would at least remain afloat, and not sink into the dark depths to become the food of water creatures. It is for these ready beings—who include us—that the Buddha teaches the Dharma.

1.2.2 **The lotus leaves** are also a well known figure. They represent the wise who are untouched by the defiling waters of greed, hate and delusion. This figure is well known in **the Sutta Nipāta**.⁸ This is also a familiar figure to non-Buddhists. In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, for example, the lotuses above the waters represent the liberated sages. They are those who “know Brahman (the universal soul),” the ones who are, like lotus leaves, untouched by any water, which just runs off them.⁹

¹ For the immediate events following the great awakening, see **The first 7 weeks**, SD 63.1.

² M 26,19-21/1:167-179 (SD 1.11).

³ D 14,3.1-7/2:36-40 (SD 49.8a). Here Vipassī Buddha and Mahā Brahmā are the speakers.

⁴ SA 1:195; J 81; BA 13, 291.

⁵ Mvst 3:314-319 = Mvst:J 3:302-309.

⁶ MA 2:176 f; SA 1:197 f.

⁷ On the early Buddhist notion of parallel universes, see **Kosala S 1** (A 10.29.2/5:59 f), SD 16.15; (**Ānanda**) **Abhibhū S** (A 3.80), SD 54.1; SD 10.9 (8.2.3).

⁸ Sn 71, 213, 547.

⁹ ChU 4.14; tr P Olivelle, *The Early Upaniṣads*, Oxford, 1998:225. For further details on the lotus pond parable, see SD 12.1 (3).

2 Brahmā Saham,pati

2.1 SAHAM,PATI'S ROLE IN THE SUTTAS

2.1.1 Saham,pati's roles

2.1.1.1 **Brahmā Saham,pati** plays various key dramatic roles in the Buddha's life. Here, in the Āyācana Sutta, he takes the initiative to invite the Buddha to declare his awakening to the world. However, Saham,pati is not merely a high heavenly figure, but one closely connected with the dispensation of Gotama Buddha. He is present at the nativity and, at the great awakening, he holds a white parasol 3 yojanas in diameter over the Bodhisattva's head (BA 287).¹⁰

2.1.1.2 Saham,pati's attaining of non-returning and prominence is told autobiographically in **Brahmā Saham,pati Sutta** (S 48.57), where the Buddha, while in retreat, reflects on the five spiritual faculties. Reading his mind, the Brahmā Saham,pati appears before the Buddha and declares his approval, saying that he [Saham,pati] too had cultivated the spiritual faculties during the time of the immediate past **Buddha Kassapa**, when he was a monk named **Sahaka**.

2.1.1.3 Destroying all desire for sense-pleasure, he was reborn in the Brahmā world, and was thereafter called **Saham,pati**.¹¹ Here "destroying all desire for sense-pleasure" clearly refers to being a non-returner. In fact, the Commentaries say that he is a **non-returner (anāgāmi) Brahmā** born in the Suddh'āvāsā (SnA 2:476), there to pass a whole aeon (*kappa*), because he has developed the first dhyana as a monk (BA 12).

2.1.2 Saham,pati in the suttas. In the Nikāyas, Brahmā Saham,pati is most often mentioned in the **Saṃyutta Nikāya**. His numerous appearances, such as in the following suttas, attest to his importance in Buddhism. In the first 6 suttas, we actually see Saham,pati interceding by way of applauding some action that the Buddha is reflecting to act upon. Elsewhere, he is, on his own, interceding where he feels it is needed.

Gārava Sutta (S 6.2)¹² & **Uruvelā S 1** (A 4.21).¹³ Saham,pati visits the Buddha and applauds the Buddha's decision to dwell in dependence only on the Dharma, that is, with the Dharma as teacher. **Cātumā Sutta** (M 67.8-12/1:458) & **(Saham,pati) Piṇḍolya Sutta** (S 22.80).¹⁴ Saham,pati reconciles the Buddha with some unruly monks.

(Ekāyana) Brahmā Sutta (S 47.18) & **(Saham,pati) Magga Sutta** (S 47.43).¹⁵ Saham,pati approves of satipatthana as the *ekāyana* ("one-going") path.

(Saham,pati) Devadatta S (S 6.12/1:152 f). Saham,pati informs the Buddha of the fate of the schismatic Devadatta.

Buddha Vandana Sutta (S 11.17).¹⁶ Sakra lauds the Buddha; Saham,pati invites him to teach (repeating S v560).

Brahma,deva Sutta (S 6.3).¹⁷ How he admonishes a brahminee, a Brahmā evotee, to stop making meaningless offerings to Brahmā and instead give alms to her own son, the monk Brahma,deva.

Kokālika Sutta 2 (S 6.10).¹⁸ Recounts how, when Kokālika, a follower of Devadatta, died and was born in Paduma Niraya, Saham,pati informed the Buddha about this.

Andhakavinda Sutta (S 6.13/1:154). Saham,pati shows great interest in the welfare of the Sangha by extolling the life of a diligent monk. At Andhaka,vinda, while the Buddha sits out in the open during the night and rain falls drop by drop, Saham,pati sings verses in praise of the life and practices of the monks and of their results.

¹⁰ This episode has been sculpted in the Relic Chamber of the Mahā Thūpa in Sri Lanka (Mahv 30.74); cf J 4:266.

¹¹ **(Saham,pati) Brahmā S** (S 48.57/5:232 f; SA 1:199).

¹² S 6.2/1:139; see also A 4.21/2:20.

¹³ S 6.2/1:139; A 4.21/2:20; see also S 5:167 f, 185, 232.

¹⁴ M 67.8-12/1:458; S 22.80/3:91.

¹⁵ S 47.18/5:167, 47.43/5:185.

¹⁶ S 11.17/1:233 f. The same exchange between Sakra and Saham,pati is found in Mvst 3:315 f = Mvst:J 3:304 f.

¹⁷ S 6.3/1:140 f @ SD 12.4.

¹⁸ S 6.10/1:151 f; also A 10.89/5:172; Sn p125.

(**Saham,pati**) **Brahmā Sutta** (S 48.57).¹⁹ He approves of the 5 spiritual faculties (*indriya*).

Parinibbāna Sutta (S 6.15/1:157 f) & **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16,6.10.2/2:157). They each have a verse eulogy spoken by Saham,pati immediately after the Buddha's final nirvana. Just as he has welcomed the child Siddhattha into the world, Saham,pati is present at the Buddha's parinirvana, where he is first to utter a eulogy.

2.1.3 The Buddha's hesitation

2.1.3.1 The Commentaries relate that during the 8th week²⁰ of the great awakening, when the Buddha sits under **the Aja,pāla Nigrodha** [goatherd banyan], he hesitates as to whether or not he should teach the Dharma. This pivotal event is also recorded in the Āyācana Sutta, relating how he reflects on the profundity of the newly-realized Dharma, his hesitation to teach it and Brahmā's entreaty. What Brahmā says following this, serves as the rationale for the Buddha to declare the newly-found Dharma to the world.

2.1.3.2 The non-returner Brahmā Saham,pati appears before the Buddha and beseeches him to open to the world the doors of the deathfree.²¹ Saham,pati reports to the Buddha that there are those "with little dust in their eyes" [§8] who, not listening to the Dharma, would fall away. Seeing this to be true, the Buddha decided to teach the Dharma.²² In so doing, Saham,pati links together Kassapa's dispensation with that of Gotama's.

2.2 BRAHMĀ SAHAM,PATI'S PAST. Once he offered to the Buddha a chain of jewels (*ratana.dāma*) as large as Sineru.²³ On the day that the elder Āṇḍaka,vāsī Mahā,phussa,deva attained arhathood, Saham,pati came to wait upon him (VbhA 352). During the time of **Kassapa Buddha**, Saham,pati was a monk named **Sahaka**, who, having practised the five spiritual faculties, was reborn in the Brahmā world, and was thereafter called Saham,pati.²⁴ The Commentaries say that he was a non-returner (*anāgāmi*) Brahmā born in the Suddhāvāsā (SnA 2:476), there to pass a whole aeon (*kappa*), because he had developed the first dhyana as a monk (BA 12).

The Buddha,vaṃsa Commentary says that, strictly speaking, his name should be "Sahaka,pati." The reason for this is that during the time of Kassapa Buddha (the buddha just before our own buddha, Gotama), Brahmā was an elder monk named Sahaka. He was adept in meditation, died in the 1st dhyana, and is reborn as Mahā Brahmā of the 1st dhyana, with the lifespan of an aeon. But "they" (the other brahmas and humans), nasalizing the name (turing the -k- into an -m-), knew him as Saham,pati.²⁵

While the Buddha sits under the Bodhi tree during the great awakening, it is said that Saham,pati holds a white parasol three yojanas²⁶ in diameter over the Buddha's head (BA 287). This episode has been sculpted in the Relic Chamber of the Mahā Thūpa.²⁷ It has also been suggested that Brahmā Saham,pati is very probably connected with Brahmi Svayambhū of brahmanical literature.²⁸

¹⁹ S 48.57/5:232; also SA 1:199.

²⁰ SA 1:199; see also J 81; BA 13, 291.

²¹ V 1:5 f; S 1:136-138; J 81; B 1; BA 13, 291.

²² The Brahmā Saham,pati also appears in (**Saham,pati**) **Vandanā S** (S 11.17/1:233 f), and **Brahmā Saham,pati S** (S 48.57/ 5:232 f).

²³ KhA 171; VA 1:115; Vism 201.

²⁴ S 5:233; SA 1:199.

²⁵ BA 12, cf 28.

²⁶ A *yojana* is about 11.25 km (7 mi) (see DhA 2:13). It is sometimes tr as "league," but it should be noted that a league is any of various units of distance from about 2.4 to 4.6 statute mi, and esp refers to the English league (about 3 mi). As such, it is best to use the Pali term here, since it has no English equivalent. This would be a huge celestial parasol, sheltering a huge area and many being under it, too.

²⁷ Mahv 30.74); cf J 4:266.

²⁸ TW Rhys Davids & H Oldenberg (trs), *Vinaya Texts*, 1:86 n1.

3 The “open-door” verse

3.1 POSSIBLE TRANSLATIONS

3.1.1 The Buddha, in response to Brahmā Sahampati’s request that the Dharma be taught to the world, famously answers,

*Apārutā tesam amatassa dvārā
ye sotavanto pamuñcantu saddham
vihimsa,saññī paguṇaṃ na bhāsīm
dhammaṃ pañītaṃ manujesu brahme*

Open to them are the doors to the Deathfree,²⁹ (O Brahmā),
for those with ears, let them free their faith!
Perceiving trouble, I did not speak
the refined, sublime Dharma among humans, O Brahmā.³⁰

[§13]

3.1.2 This well known verse is found in the suttas as well as the Vinaya, as follows:

• Vinaya	Mv 1.5.12 @ V 1:7, as at M 26,21	SD 12.1 (3.1)
• Mahā’padāna Sutta	D 14,3.10/2:39, spoken by Vipassī Buddha to Mahā Brahmā	SD 49.8
• Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta	M 26,21.5/1:169; MĀ 204 (T765.4), by Brahmā Sahampati	SD 1.11
• Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta	M 85,45/2:93, quoting M 26,21	SD 55.2
• Āyācana Sutta	S 6.1,13/1:138, a shorter account of the verse episode	SD 12.2
• Pārāyana Sutta	Sn 1146c, as <i>pamuñcassu saddham</i> (the context is <i>saddhā</i>)	SD 49.6b
• Madhur’attha,vilāsini	BA 18, recounts the episode around the verse	

3.1.3 The verse is quite straightforward, except for line b, which also appears in **the Jana,vasabha Sutta** (D 18) quoted by the yaksha Jana,vasabha (an incarnation³¹ of Bimbisāra).³² This is a difficult sentence. Some translations are:

• C A F Rhys Davids	“renounce the faith they hold”	1917, S:RD 174
• F L Woodward	“renounce the creed ye hold”	<i>Some Sayings of the Buddha</i> 1925:7
• I B Horner	“let them renounce their faith”	1951 V:H 1:9
• J J Jones	“Let (them) shed the faith that is based on a harmful idea”	<i>Mahavastu</i> 1956, Mvst:J 3:308
• P Masefield	“let them give forth faith”	<i>Divine Revelation in Pali Buddhism</i> 1986:76, 79; see pp 76-80
• K R Norman	“declare your faith”	1992, Sn:N 1146
• M Walshe	“put forth faith”	1995, D:W 215
• H Nakamura	“abandon other faiths”	<i>Gotama Buddha</i> 1, 2000:462; see n53
• Bhikkhu Bodhi	“release faith”	2000, S:B 233
• Bhikkhu Sujato	“let (them) make sure their faith”	2005:23 & n

The Dīgha Subcommentary glosses it as *saddham pavedentu*, “let them declare their faith” (DAṬ 2:86). The traditional Thai translation is *ซึ่งยื่นศรัทธาทภาชนะออกรับ* (“stretch forth the vessel of faith to receive”).

Edgerton’s BHSD, is helpful here. He defines *pramuñcati* as follows (standardized)

- (1) utters (words; so in Pali with object *vācam*), used absolutely: *naivam āryāḥ pramuñcati* no object expressed in stanza, but clearly means “utter words” (Uv 8.9);
- (2) sheds (tears): *aṣṛūṇi pramuktāni* (Kāraṇḍa,vyūha 70.2), or *pramuñca* (Kārvy 70.4).

The next BHSD headword is *pramuñcana* (nt or adj), the noun form of *pramuñcati*, and which is defined as “sending forth” (usually rays of light). From Edgerton’s suggestion, we can idiomatically render *pamuñcantu* and the line as “let them declare [utter] their faith” or more figuratively, “let their faith shine forth.”

²⁹ “The doors to the deathfree” (*amatassa dvārā*) = the noble path (*ariya,magga*) (VA 963).

³⁰ This verse: BHS: *apāvṛtaṃ me amṛtasya dvāraṃ | brahmeti bhagavantam ye śrotukāmā | śradhām pramuñcantu viheṭṭha,samjñāṃ || viheṭṭha,samjñō praguṇō abhūsi | dharmo asuddho magadheṣu pūrvam ||* (Mvst 3:319, Senart). BHSD: sv viheṭṭhā, however, says that Senart’s text is “very corrupt” (Edgerton 1953: 50).

³¹ Here, “incarnation” simple means assuming a bodily form, but without any suggestion of an abiding soul.

³² D 18,27/2:217 (SD 62.3).

3.2 NAKAMURA'S SOLUTION.

3.2.1 The verse. However, the most convincing arguments, I think, are given by **Hajime NAKAMURA** in his *Gotama Buddha* volume 1 (2000:461 note 53). He points out that Buddhaghosa glosses the sentence as *sabbe attano saddham̐ pamuñcantu visajjantu*³³ (SA 203), which “seems to be telling people to shed their faith in the other religions of the time, but the Chinese translation (or the base text, probably later than the Pāli version) says the exact opposite: *wénzhě dé dǔxìn* (聞者得篤信) “those who hear will attain devout faith”,³⁴ *Zēngyī āhánjīng* 增壹阿含經 fasc 10 [EĀ = T2.593b].”³⁵

Nakamura then quotes **the Mahāvastu** version of our Sutta passage:

<p><i>apāvṛtaṃ me amṛtasya dvāraṃ brahmeti bhagavantam ye śrotukāmā śraddhāṃ pramuñcantu viheṭhasamjñāṃ viheṭhasamjñō praguṇo abhūsi dharmo aśuddho magadheṣu pūrvam </i></p>	<p>Open is the door to the Deathfree by me, O Brahma! Let those who wish to hear the Blessed One free their faith of harmful ideas. A dharma based on wrong, harmful ideas, a dharma impure, has previously arisen in Magadha. (Mvst 3:319; tr Piya Tan)³⁶</p>
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In later texts, however, Nakamura observes, this is changed to “those with faith should rejoice”:

dvāraṃ ye śrotukā[māh] pram[od]antu śraddhāḥ | vi[he-] ... || (Catuspariṣat Sūtra, MS cat no 400);

*avāvariṣye amṛtasya dvāraṃ ye śrotukāmā pramodantu śraddhāḥ |
viheṭhapreḷṣe pracura na bhāṣe dharmam̐ praṇitam̐ manujesu brahman ||* (Catusp S, MS cat no 584);
*apācariṣye amṛtasya dvāraṃ ye śrotukāmāḥ praṇudantu kāṅkṣāḥ |
viheṭhapreḷṣī pracuraṃ me ne bhāṣe dharmam̐ praṇitam̐ manujesu brahman ||* (Saṅghabhedavastu 1);³⁷

*apāvṛtās teṣam amṛtasya dvārā brahman ti satatam̐ ye śrotuvantaḥ |
praviśanti śraddhā na viheṭhasamjñāḥ śṛṇvanti dharmam̐ magadheṣu sattvāḥ ||* (Lalv 25.34)³⁸

<p>T25n1509_p63b5(00) </p>	<p>我今開甘露味門， <i>wǒ jīn kāi gānlùwèimén</i></p>	<p>若有信者得歡喜； <i>ruò yǒu xìnzhe dé huānxǐ</i></p>
<p>T25n1509_p63b6(00) </p>	<p>於諸人中說妙法， <i>yú zhū rén zhōng shuō miào fǎ</i></p>	<p>非惱他故而為說。 <i>fēi nǎo tā gù'ér wèi shuō.</i></p>

“I now open the ambrosial gate, that those with faith gain joy; I am teaching the wonderful Law among people. | It is to prevent others from tormenting themselves. Therefore, I am preaching.”

(大智度論卷第一 *Dàzhìdùlùn juàndīyī*, fasc 1 = T25.1509.63b5-6)

As such, concludes Nakamura, “There is no doubt that the interpretation of the [Saṃyutta] phrase as meaning ‘abandon other faiths’ reflects the ideas of early Buddhism.” (2000:462). As such, it is possible to translate *pamuñcantu saddham̐* as “give up your (false) faith” or, simply, “set faith free.”

PED proposes the interesting interpretation of *saddham̐ pamuñcati* (V 1:7; D 2:39; Sn 1146), as “to give up offerings, to abandon Brahmanism” (PED: Saddha²). PED takes *saddha* as a synecdoche for

³³ VA 5:693 (comy on **Mv 1.5.12** = V 1:7); DA 2:471 (comy on **Mahā’padāna S** ad D 14,3.7/2:39); MA 2:181 (comy on **Ariya Pariyesanā S** ad M 26,21/1:169); SA 1:203 (comy on **Āyācana S** ad S 6.1,13/1:138).

³⁴ Here 得 pronounced as *dēi* = “must, ought to, need to,” or as *dé* = “to get, to gain.” As such, it can also be rendered as “those who hear ought to attain faith (or, must show faith).”

³⁵ Chinese & refs standardized. See Fumio ENOMOTO, “Higashi Torukisutan shutsudo bonbon agon no keifu” [The affiliation of the Central Asian sūtra fragments], *Kachō Tanki Daigaku kenkyū kiyō* 29, Dec 1984:17 f.

³⁶ Cf **Lalita, vistāra**: *apāvṛtās teṣam amṛtasya dvāra brahman ti satatam̐ ye śrotuvantaḥ | praviśanti śraddhā na viheṭhasamjñāḥ śṛṇvanti dharmam̐ magadheṣu sattvāḥ* (Lalv 25.34). See below.

³⁷ Rome: IsMEO, *Serie Orientale Roma* 49:1,2 1977:230.

³⁸ Salomon Lefman (ed), *Lalitavistara: Leben und Lehre des Çākya-Buddha* vol 1, Halle a S: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses, 1902:400.

Brahmanism.³⁹ If we accept this definition, then we could render the phrase as “let them give up ancestor worship [the shraddha]!”

3.2.2 *Pamuñcatu saddham*

3.2.2.1 Now, let us turn to the phrase, mentioned by Nakamura as *pamuñcassu saddham*, which appears only in the Sutta Nipāta.⁴⁰ According to Nakamura, those who take this phrase to mean “arouse faith,” base it on the Pali Commentaries and the interpretations found in Chinese translations. He disagrees with this and reasons as follows:

First, *pramuñcati* as it appears in Sanskrit literature has meant “abandon” since the time of the Rg Veda. In slightly later texts it means “loosen” or “free,” and in the passive (*pramucyate*) it means “to disappear.” The dictionaries of Böthlingk and Roth, Williams and Apte are all in agreement here.

Second, “arouse faith” is a concept of later Buddhism. Neither *pamuñcassu saddham* nor its Sanskrit equivalent *pramuñcasva śraddhām* appears in general Buddhist texts or in general Sanskrit texts. It is a strange expression.

Third, when Brahmā spoke thus to Gotama, it was before the Buddha’s first discourse; Buddhism itself had not been established. “Abandon other faiths” therefore fits the context far better.

Fourth, later doctrinal scholars had no historical awareness. Puzzled by the expression, they make a strained interpretation.

Fifth, even today we find writers attempting to make the text coherent. A number of Japanese translations by leading Buddhist scholars depart from the original text.

For these reasons I support the literal translation of Hakuju Ui and others.

(Nakamura 2000:462)

3.2.2.2 We earlier mentioned here that the phrase *pamuñcassu saddham* appears only in the Sutta Nipāta [3.2.2.1], in fact, near the end of the whole collection, where the Buddha addresses Piṅgiya with this verse:

*Yathā āhu vakkali mutta, saddho
bhadr’āvudha ālavi, gotama ca
evam eva tvam pi pamuñcassu saddham
gamissasi tvam piṅgiya maccu, dheyya, pāram*

Just as Vakkali is released by faith,
and Bhadravudha, and Ālavi Gotama, too.
Even so, you, too, declare [put forth] your faith,
Piṅgiya—you will go to the far shore beyond
death’s realm. (Sn 1146)

In this connection, **the Cūḷa Niddesa** has this gloss: *muñcassu pamuñcassu sampamuñcassu adhimuñcassu okappehi* (Nc:VRI 203). This lexical list is a bit problematic. The first two words are clearly synonyms, and we can translate them as imperative verbs, “release” (*muñcassu*) and “set free” (*pamuñcassu*). We can also render *sampamuñcassu* as “fully set free,” and all these three translations are synonymous. But *adhimuñcassu* (from *adhimuccati*) is properly rendered as “apply, adhere to, ascertain, have faith” and such. *Okappehi*, meaning “have faith in, fix the mind on, rely on,” have senses that overlap with the preceding.

It is likely that at the time when the Niddesa was composed, these were all synonyms or near-synonyms. But the first two words shifted semantically in due course. We have to work backwards as it were to trace the original or proper sense of the words. K R Norman gives a very interesting and useful philological analysis of our passage (Tha:N 389 n1146), most of whose points have been mentioned above.

3.2.2.3 One last remark is in order, that is, a word or term need not have the same fixed sense throughout the Canon, or even the Nikāyas. Its context should be carefully examined, and with the best triangulation of *text, context and commentary*, we should try our best to tease out the sense of the word or passage as intended by its author.

³⁹ On *saddha* (Skt *śraddha*, “ancestor worship”), see D 1:97; A 1:160, 5:269-273, 273; J 2:360; DA 1:267. On “give up the *śraddha*,” see (**Saddha**) **Jāṇussoṇi S** (A 10.177), SD 2.61 (2).

⁴⁰ Sn 1146; Nc:VRI 20, 203, 222; SnA 2:606 f; NcA 94.

Having said that, I would like to add that we should take the “open-door” stanza *historically*, in that it addresses the false brahmanical views and practices of the day. Implicitly, this entails the declaration of faith and refuge-taking that often ends the suttas. Hence, “Let them declare [ascertain] their faith!” which best reflects the polysemy of the sentence’s key word.

3.2.2.4 Rendering *pamuñcantu saddham* as “free their faith” [3.1], somewhat poetic, is apparently the least problematic here: it may even be the best way of expressing the polysemy of the expression. Firstly, there is a hint here that we (if we are to follow the Buddha) should first of all give up the brahminical *śrāddha* and its related forms today (ritualistic ancestor worship, “transference” of merit,⁴¹ etc).⁴² We must free ourselves from the oppressive and dying past.

Secondly, we are admonished by the Buddha to turn away from Brahmanism and similar ritualistic and exploitative religions and systems [3.2.1], and to turn to the true Dharma, that is, avoiding the institutionalizing or theologizing (and brahminization) of Buddhism, but to work to understand views and renounce them. Only in renouncing what is not ours in the first place will be really free socially and spiritually.⁴³

Thirdly, we need to free our faith from personal views, theology, brahminical tendencies, worldly and laicizing tendencies, superstition, and imaginative beliefs [3.2.2]. We should free our faith so that we can see the historical and true Buddha directly through the Dharma, and to cultivate the spiritual faculty of faith.⁴⁴

Fourthly, this call for the declaration of faith marks the start of the Buddha’s dispensation, for which he had spent numerous aeons—that is, to teach the liberating Dharma for the benefit of those who would listen [4]. Early Buddhism begins with the faith that fres us from all faiths and views, by awakening us to true reality.⁴⁵

3.2.2.5 Finally, we must get used to the idea that in the Pali suttas, the Dharma sense is not readily carved into the words as is common in English.⁴⁶ Polysemy is a vital characteristic of Sutta Pali, where a word, term or phrase can have more than one, indeed, multiple, senses, and all of which apply simultaneously. Such cases are windows that the Dharma gives us to look into the limits of language as instruments to examine the true nature of reality. However, if we allow our mind and heart to open up to what lies behind and in between the words, we will be richly rewarded with a liberating vision.

4 The Buddha’s decision to teach

4.1 The Āyācana Sutta records the Buddha’s initial hesitance to teach the Dharma, an account that is also found elsewhere in the Pāli Canon:

The Vinaya (V 1:4 ff): the account of the first seven weeks after the great awakening.

The Dīgha: **Mahāpadāna Sutta** (D 14/2:36 ff), where it is recounted in relation to the past Buddha Vipassī Buddha.

The Majjhima: **Ariya Pariyesanā Sutta** (M 26/1:169); **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra Sutta** (M 85/2:93).

The Saṃyutta: **Āyācanā Sutta** (S 6.1/1:137), with BHS parallel in the Mahāvastu.⁴⁷

These numerous identical passages attest to the age and importance of the episode.

4.2 The episode of Brahmā’s request, however, is not found at all in the Madhyama Āgama account. The same episode is, however, found in **the Ekottara Āgama** parallel to the Āyācana Sutta, in Sanskrit

⁴¹ On the dedication of merit, see SD 2.6a (6); 2.6b (3); 2.7 (4).

⁴² On Brahmā’s significant role here, see esp SD 49.8b (2.3.7).

⁴³ See **The notion of *dīṭṭhi***, SD 40a.1.

⁴⁴ On faith (*saddhā*) as a spiritual faculty (*indriya*), see ***Pañc’indriya***, SD 104, esp (2.2).

⁴⁵ On the Buddha’s “hesitation” to teach, see **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,19.4/1:168), SD 1.11 & **Why the Buddha “hesitated” to teach**, SD 12.1. On the phrase *pamuñcantu saddham*, see SD 59.8b (2.3.7.1).

⁴⁶ On Pali polysemy, see SD 1.1 (4.4.5) ; SD 10.16 (1.3.1-1.3.2).

⁴⁷ BHS parallel at Mvst 3:314-319 = Mvst:J 3:302-309 (Senart 1897). The Chinese Āgama version at DĀ 1 = T1.-8b21.

fragments of the **Catuṣpariṣat Sūtra**,⁴⁸ in five sūtras preserved as **individual Chinese translations**,⁴⁹ and in the **Lalitavistara**.⁵⁰ The Buddha's hesitation and Brahmā's request also recur in similar terms in the Vinayas of the Dharma, guptaka, Lokōttaravāda, Mahīśāsaka, Mūla, sarvāstivāda and Theravāda.⁵¹

4.3 The agreement found among such a broad range of sources on the fact that the Buddha was disinclined to teach and only did so when requested by Brahmā suggests that its absence from the Madhyama Āgama discourse is a case of textual corruption, possibly even a case of intentional omission. Such an intentional omission would not be surprising, since this passage presents a problem not easy to solve. The problem here is how to combine the Buddha's "disinclination" to teach with the idea common to all Buddhist traditions that the Buddha had prepared himself over numerous aeons for precisely this task.

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The Discourse on the Request

S 6.1

1 Thus have I heard.

The Buddha hesitates

At one time, the Blessed One was staying at the foot of the Goatherd Banyan Tree on the bank of the river Nerañjarā at Uruvelā, just after he had become fully self-awakened.⁵²

2 Then, when the Blessed One was alone in retreat, this reflection arose in his mind:

3 "This truth [Dharma] that I have discovered is deep, hard to see, hard to understand, peaceful, sublime, unattainable through discursive thought,⁵³ subtle, to be known by the wise.⁵⁴

But this generation revels in attachment, delights in attachment, rejoices in attachment.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ This discourse belongs to the no longer extant Skt version of the Dīrgha Āgama and recounts the foundation of the fourfold Buddhist community since the time of the Buddha's awakening. The relevant passage from **Catuṣpariṣat Sūtra** is found in Waldschmidt 1957:108-120, tr Kloppenborg 1973:15-17.

⁴⁹ EĀ 19.1 = T2.593a-b, tr in Bareau 1988:78, cf also Bareau 1980:5. The individual trs are T186 = T3.527c23, T187 = T3.603a10, T189 = T3.642c-643a, T190 = T3.806a3 and T191 = T3.952c-953a, cf Waldschmidt 1967g:173.

⁵⁰ The relevant passage from **Lalita, vistara** in Foucaux 1884:326; Lefmann 1902:392.

⁵¹ Dharmaguptaka Vinaya: T1428 = T22.786b-787b, tr in Bareau 1963:138-139; Lokottaravāda Vinaya (Mahāvastu): Senart 1897:314, tr in Jones 1978, Mvst.J :302; Mahīśāsaka Vinaya: T 421 = T22.103c-104a, tr in Bareau 1963:136-138; Mūlasarvāstivāda Vinaya: Chinese version T 450 = T24.126b, tr in Waldschmidt 1957:109-121, Skt version in Gnoli 1977:128-130, Tibetan version in Waldschmidt 1957:109-121, tr in Feer 1883:14-16; Theravāda Vinaya: V 1:4-7, tr in Horner 1982 V:H 4:6-10.

⁵² "Just after he had become fully awakened," *paṭhamābhisambuddho*, lit "when he first became fully awakened."

⁵³ *Atakkāvacaro* = *na + takka + avacara*, lit "not in the sphere of discursive thought (or logic)" (V 1:4 = D 2:36 = 37 = M 1:167 = S 1:136 ≠ M 1:487 ≠ 2:172; A 2:289; D 1:12; It 37). See **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14.3.1.2), SD 49.8.

⁵⁴ *Paṇḍita, vedanīyo*.

⁵⁵ "**Attachment**," *ālaya*, ie worldly attachment, sensuality, "worldliness" (M:ÑB 1218 n306). The word has a wide range of meanings: 1 (a) house, dwelling, habitat, household, a built structure; (b) nest, lair, perch, shelter; (c) abode, seat, place of rest, resort, haven, repository; (d) domain, field of activity, sphere; 2 (a) liking, inclination, attachment, fondness for, partiality towards; (b) affection, love; (c) (as a metaphysical concept) **desire, yearning, clinging, sensual attachment** (= *taṇhā*); (d) thought preparatory to a decision (regarding the *vassa*), the decision itself; (3) feint, pretence, ruse, dissimulation, impersonation (CPD). **MA**: The term denotes both sense-pleasures and the thoughts of craving concerned with them (MA 2:174 f). **SA** explains *ālaya* objectively as the 5 cords of sensual pleasure (*pañca kāma, guṇa*) [SD 8.7 (2)]. They are called "attachment" because they attach themselves to these 5 cords of sensual pleasure. Subjectively, *ālaya* refers to the 108 mental investigations driven by craving (*taṇhā, vicarita*) [A 2:212 f], and it is these that attach themselves to their objects. (SA 1:195)

For such a generation, revelling in attachment, delighting in attachment, rejoicing in attachment, this truth [Dharma] is hard to see, that is to say, specific conditionality,⁵⁶ dependent arising.⁵⁷

3.2 And this truth [Dharma], too, is hard to see, that is, the stilling of all formations,⁵⁸ the giving up of all acquisition,⁵⁹ the destruction of craving, fading away (of lust),⁶⁰ cessation (of suffering), nirvana.

If I were to teach the truth [Dharma], and if others were not to understand me, that would be tiresome and troubling for me.”

4 Thereupon, these stanzas, unheard before,⁶¹ arose spontaneously⁶² in the Blessed One:⁶³

556 I have discovered the truth with difficulty:
enough with declaring it!
Not easily understood [awakened to] it is
by those lost in lust and hate.

557⁶⁴ It goes against the current, abstruse,
profound, hard to see, subtle—
those dyed in lust will not see it,
nor those shrouded in massive darkness. [137]

5 Thinking thus, the Blessed One’s mind inclined to living at ease,⁶⁵ rather than teaching the Dharma.

⁵⁶ “Specific conditionality,” *idap,paccayatā*, ie causal relationship, shows how one thing is related to another, thus: “When this, is that is; when this arises, that arises. When this is not, that is not; when this ceases, that ceases” (M 3:63; S 2:28, 95). See also V 1:5; D 1:85, 2:55; M 1:262; S 2:25, 5:71. See foll n.

⁵⁷ “Dependent arising,” *paṭicca,samuppāda*, is a formulation of the complex interdependent working of all mental and physical phenomena revealing how they inherently lack any permanent entity or *attā*. See SD 5.16.

⁵⁸ “Stilling of all formations,” *sabba,sāṅkhāra,samatha*. *Sāṅkhārā* here means the active “forming” actions (karma) through body, speech and mind, being either wholesome or unwholesome (S 12.1,7). Nyanatiloka uses the neologism “karma-formations” to specifically refer to this aspect of *sāṅkhāra*, a word that is polysemic and profound. Sometimes the term *abhisāṅkhāra* is used here (D 3:217; M 1:297; S 12.51; A 1:112). See BDict: *sāṅkhāra*.

⁵⁹ “Acquisition,” *upadhi*, see SD 28.11 (3.2).

⁶⁰ “Fading away,” *virāga*, also tr as “dispassion.”

⁶¹ *pubbe assuta,pubbā*, lit “unheard of before, before.” See Oskar Von Hinüber, “*Anacchariyā pubbe assuta,pubbā*” in *Selected Papers on Pāli Studies*, Oxford: PTS, 1994:17-24, where he contends that *anacchariyā* represents Skt **an-akṣar-ikā*, but, retorts Bodhi, “his argument rests on the assumption that *pubbe assuta,pubbā* would be redundancy and therefore *pubbe* must be taken in apposition to the preceding *anacchariyā*. This assumption, however, is contradicted by D 1:184,27-29, where we find *pubbe...sutapubbā* as one block. Interestingly, no corresponding word is to be found in the Mahāvastu and Lalitavistara versions of the same incident.” (S:B 431 n365; citations normalized). See foll n.

⁶² PTS *acchariyā*; prob wr for *anacchariyā* (Be Ce Se), lit “not wonderful,” ie appearing quite naturally or spontaneously (CPD) (D 2: 93 = S 5:259; M 3:121; A 4:211; J 3:70, 406, 4:153, 6:220; cf V 2:17; S 4:301). For the tr here I am guided by the context of **Ariya,pariyesanā S** (M 26.19/1:168), where the reading is *anacchariyā*, and where the Buddha himself is the narrator: he is more likely to have said that the stanzas are “spontaneous” rather than “marvellous.” Although the Commentators seem to take *anacchariyā* as deriving from *acchariyā*, most translators render it as “spontaneously,” apparently invoking *acchara*, “moment.” Buddhaghosa glosses *anacchariyā* as *anu-acchariyā*, “repeatedly or following *acchariyā*” (VA 1:133; SA 1:196). For SA Porāṇa Ṭikā gloss and further comments, see S:B 431 n 365. See prev n.

⁶³ These 2 verses occur in V 1:4 = M 1:169 = S 1:136; D 14,3.5/2:37 Vipassī Buddha (SD 49.8); Mvst 3:315.

⁶⁴ This verse recurs at **Mv 1.5.3** (V 1:5*) = **Mahāpadāna S** (D 14,3.2.3/2:36, Vipassī Buddha), SD 49.8 = **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26,19.7/1:168), SD 1.11 = **Āyacana S** (S 6.1/1:136), SD 12.2; Mvst 3:315.

⁶⁵ “Inclined to living at ease,” *appossukkatāya* = *appa* (little) + *ussukka* (striving for), meaning “little zeal”; ie “careless, unconcerned; living at ease, inactive” (V 2:188; D 2:176 = M 3:175 ≠ D 2:177 = M 3:176; M 1:450; Sn 43; Nc 91 = Ap 9; Thī 457, 477; Dh 330). Comys: *Appossukkatā* means the lack of desire to teach (SA 1:197). But why, asks MA, when the Bodhisattva had long ago made an aspiration to reach Buddhahood in order to liberate others, is he now inclined towards living at ease? Because only after reaching awakening did he fully realize the weight of defilements in people’s minds and of the profundity of the Dharma. Furthermore, he wanted Brahmā to

Brahmā Saham,pati's descent

6 Then, Brahmā Saham,pati, having known with his own mind the reflection in the Blessed One's mind, thought:

“Alas, the world is lost! Alas, the world is destroyed, now that the mind of the Tathagata, the Arhat, the Fully Self-awakened One, inclines to living at ease, not to teaching Dharma!”⁶⁶

7 Then, just as a strong man might stretch his arm out or bend it back, Brahmā Saham,pati disappeared from the Brahmā world and reappeared before the Blessed One.

8 Then Brahmā Saham,pati, having arranged his upper robe on one shoulder, knelt down on his right knee on the ground, raised his palms lotus-wise towards the Blessed One, and said this to him:

“Bhante, let the Blessed One teach the Dharma! Let the Well-farer [Sugata] teach the Dharma! **There are beings with little dust in their eyes who are falling away through not hearing the Dharma. There are those who will understand the Dharma.**”⁶⁷

9 Brahmā Saham,pati said this. Having said that, he further said this:

[THE MAGADHA VERSE]⁶⁸

There has appeared in the past (until now) in Magadha

An impure Dharma devised by those still tainted.⁶⁹

Throw open this door to the deathfree!⁷⁰

Let them hear the Dharma discovered by the stainless one!⁷¹

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[Brahma's invitation verses]⁷²

Just as one standing on a mountain peak

might see below the people all around,

even so, O wise one, universal eye,⁷³

entreat him to teach, so that beings who venerated Brahmā would recognize the Dharma's value and desire to listen to it. (SA 1:197 f; MA 2:176 f on **Ariya Pariyesanā S**, M 26).

⁶⁶ In **Mahāvastu** account, the deity who approaches the Buddha is referred to only as “Mahā Brahmā,” and is accompanied by many other gods, incl Sakra. On Brahmā Saham,pati's role in the Buddha story, see (2).

⁶⁷ *Desetu bhante bhagavā dhammaṃ desetu Sugato dhammaṃ. Santi sattā appa,raj'akkha,jātikā, assavaṇatā dhammassa parihāyanti. Bhavissanti dhammassa aññātāro ti.* A similar request is made mutatis mutandis (*sattā* is replaced by *kula,puttā*, “sons of family”) by Anātha,piṇḍika on his deathbed: **Anātha,piṇḍik'ovāda S** (M 143,15/-3:261), SD 23.9.

⁶⁸ The foll 3 verses (Brahma's invitation + the Magadha verses) recur in **Bodhi Rāja,kumāra S** (M 85,45/2:93, quoting M 26.21) & **Brahmāyācana S** (S 6.1,13/1:138), BA 18. See n at subheader [§20.4].

⁶⁹ These two lines, in dialectical terms, form the **thesis**, the real but unsatisfactory state of things stated by Brahmā on behalf of sentient beings as it were. In social terms, this statement clearly refers to the brahminical system of philosophy and practices, that is, the *āstika* system. This statement also means that the liberating truth has been forgotten during this time [see v558d n]. As such, the Buddha's claim that his newly proclaimed Dharma is “unheard before” (*pubbe assuta,pubbā*) is clearly justified. Kvu 4.8/286 discusses the question how far the Buddha did not have a teacher (**Ariya Pariyesanā S**, M 26,25/1:170 @ SD 1.11) when, as a Bodhisattva (named Joti,pāla) he had been Kassapa Buddha's disciple (**Ghaṭikāra S**, M 81.6/2:46, 81.3/2:54), and how far the Buddha's awakening was an insight into “things unheard before” (**Dhamma,cakka Pavattana S**, S 56.11,9-12/5:422- f; V 1:10-12 @ SD 1.1). See also Comy ad loc (KvuA 78). See **Mahā Parinibbāna S** (D 16,6.4), SD 9 & Piya Tan, “The Buddha and His Disciples” 2004b (10:20b, 11a).

⁷⁰ Comy: The door to the deathfree is the noble path, “the door to the deathfree nirvana” (SA 1:199). While *dvāra* here is singular, below [13] it is plural (*dvārā*).

⁷¹ These last 2 lines form the **antithesis** to Brahmā's earlier request. The first statement was a definition of the problem, and this second statement is a proposal for its solution. See v558b n.

⁷² These 2 verses (without the prec Magadha verse) recur in **Mahā'padāna S** (D 14,3.9), SD 49.8 (qv for other refs).

⁷³ “The 5 eyes” (*cakkhu*). The Buddha eye (*buddha,cakkhu*) is a name for the knowledge of the degrees of maturity in the faculties of being (*indriya,paropariyatta,nāṇa*) and the knowledge of the dispositions and latent tendencies

ascend the palace, made of the Dharma!
 May he consider mankind, sunk in sorrow,
 overcome by birth and decay! 559

Arise, hero! Victor in battle!
 Caravan leader, debt-free one, wander in the world!
 Teach the Dharma, O blessed lord!⁷⁴
 There will be those who will understand.⁷⁵ [138] 560

10 Then, heeding Brahmā's plea, and out of compassion for beings, the Blessed One surveyed the world with the Buddha-eye.

11 Surveying the world with the Buddha-eye, the Blessed One saw beings with little dust in their eyes and beings with much dust in their eyes, the keen and the dull, the good and the evil, those easy to teach and those hard to teach, and some who live seeing blame (for wrongdoing) and fear (of pain) here and in the hereafter.⁷⁶

Parable of the lotus ponds

12 Just as in a lotus pond of the blue or white or red lotuses,⁷⁷ some lotuses might be born in the water, grow up in the water, and thrive while submerged in the water, without rising out of the water; some lotuses might be born in the water, grow up in the water, and stand up at an even level with the water; some lotuses might be born in the water and grow up in the water, but would rise up from the water and stand up in the water without being soiled by the water—

So, too, surveying the world with the Buddha Eye, the Blessed One sees beings with little dust in their eyes and with much dust in their eyes, with keen faculties and with dull faculties, with good qualities and with bad qualities, easy to teach and difficult to teach, and a few who dwelt seeing blame and fear in the next world.

13 Having seen this, he answers Brahmā Saham,pati in verse:⁷⁸

Open to them are the doors to the deathfree⁷⁹ (O Brahma):
 for those with ears to hear, let them free their faith!⁸⁰

of beings (*āsāyānusaya, nāṇa*). The “knowledge of omniscience” is called the universal eye (*samanta, cakkhu*) (S v559d); see **Kaṇṇaka-t,thala S** (M 90/2:125-133), SD 10.8 (2) & **Sandaka S** (M 76), SD 35.7. The knowledge of the 3 lower paths is called the Dharma eye or “Dharma vision” (*dhamma, cakkhu*). Together with the divine eye or clairvoyance (*dibba, cakkhu*) (S 6.5/1:145, 12.70/2:121 f) and the physical eye (*maṃsa, cakkhu*), these make up the “five eyes” of the Buddha (Nc 235; SA 1:200).

⁷⁴ Reading *desassu bhagavā dhammam* (Be Se, PTS2 1998); PTS1 (1884) *desetu* (found also in D and V parallels) “seems to be a normalization influenced by the preceding prose passage” (S:B 432 n369). The verse is found again uttered by Brahmā Saham,pati in **Buddha Vandanā S** (S v919 = 11.17/1:234).

⁷⁵ V 1:4-7; M 1:167-69; S 1:136-39; D 2:36-40 Vipassī Buddha; Mvst 3:314-19; cf S 1:234.

⁷⁶ “Seeing blame...the hereafter,” *paraloka, vajja, bhaya, dassāvino* (pl), an ambiguous cpd. M:ÑB 261 (**Ariya, pariyesanā S**, M 26.21/1:169) tr as “seeing fear in blame and in the other world,” which agrees well with Comys, which resolve it as *paralokañ c'eva vajjañ ca bhayato passanti* (MA 2:179; SA 1:200). Bodhi, however, notes that at **Dh 317 f bhaya** and *vajja* are treated as parallel terms, which suggests that the cpd should be resolved as *paraloke vajjañ c'eva bhayañ ca passanti*. (S:B 433 n371). In fact, it is obvious that the two terms are allusions to “moral shame” (*hiri*) and “moral fear” (*ottappa*) respectively.

⁷⁷ *Uppala* (Skt *utpala*), *paduma* (Skt *padma*) and *puṇḍarīka* respectively. Cf **Sāmañña, phala S** (D 2,80/1:75), SD 8.10 & **Kāya, gatā, sati S** (M 119,20/3:93 f), SD 14.21, where the parable of lotuses in a pond is applied in the context of the 3rd dhyanas. On the lotus parable, see (1.2).

⁷⁸ On this verse, see Intro (3.2).

⁷⁹ “The doors to the deathfree” (*amatassa dvārā*) = the noble path (*ariya, magga*) (VA 963).

Perceiving trouble, I did not speak
the refined, sublime Dharma among humans, O Brahmā.⁸¹

14 Then, Brahmā Saham,pati, having known, “There is consent by the Blessed One for the teaching of the truth [Dharma]!”⁸² pays homage to the Blessed One, keeping him to the right, disappeared right there.⁸³

— evaṃ —

[**Bibliography:** see “Why the Buddha ‘hesitated’ to teach,” SD 12.1]

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⁸⁰ *Pamuñcantu saddhamā*, alt tr: “Give up your (false) faith,” even “Set faith free”; also “give up the *śrāddha*”: see (Saddha) Jāpussoṇi S A 10.177), SD 2.61 (2). Thai tr: ชั่งยื่นศรัทธาทภาชนะออกกรับ (“stretch forth the vessel of faith to receive”). This is a difficult sentence: for a detailed study, see [3].

⁸¹ This verse: BHS: *apāvṛtaṃ me amṛtasya dvāraṃ | brahmeti bhagavantam ye śrotukāmā | śraddhāṃ pramūcāntu viheṭṭha,saṃjñāṃ || viheṭṭha,saṃjñā praguṇo abhūsi | dharmo aśuddho maḡadheṣu pūvāṃ ||* (Mvst 3:319, Senart). BHSD: sv viheṭṭhā, however, says that Senart’s text is “very corrupt” (Edgerton 1953: 50).

⁸² *Katāvakaṣo kho’ mhi bhagavatā* [vl *bhagavato*] *dhamma,desanāya*, free tr: “The Blessed One has consented to the teaching of the Dharma!” Here *bhagavato* (dat, gen) (PTS 1884) appears to be wr. In **Ariya Pariyesanā S** (M 26.21/1:169), M:ÑB (similarly at V:H 4:10) has “I have created the opportunity for the Blessed One to teach the Dhamma.” CPD: *katāvakāsa*, however, remarks that this rendition is “both grammatically impossible and contextually unlikely; the reading *bhagavato* at S 1:138,26, however, would seem to represent a reinterpretation of the clause supporting the traditional interpretation of the passage, unless the gen is taken as the gen of the agent to be construed with *katāvakāso*.” CPD cites **Mahā,vastu**, *bhagavatā mahābrahmaṇe avakāṣe kṛte* (Mvst 3:319), “which would seem to support the interpretation suggested above.”

⁸³ V 1:7; M 1:170; S 1:138; D 2:39 Vipassī Buddha; Mvst 3:318; cf. S:B 1:233 n372; also Sn 1146c.